

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Public Works Site Small Area Guide Process**  
**Focus Group – Property and Business Owners**  
**Wednesday, April 14, 2010, 8:00 am**  
**Edina City Hall Council Chambers**

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**City Staff Present:**

**Heather Worthington, Assistant City Manager**

**CAT Members, Property and Business Owners Present:**

**Kevin Staunton-Chair**

**Linda Odell**

**Ken Johnson**

**Bob Shadduck**

**Larry Chestler**

**Nancy Grazzini-Olson**

**Lisa Diehl**

**Andy Brown**

**Kim Montgomery**

**Ken Jacobson**

**Sue Davison**

**Eric Bredeson**

**Jim Balsch**

**Josh Sprague**

**Chris Rofidal**

**Matt Boockmeier**

**Jo Olsen**

**Gene Persha**

**Peyton Robb**

**Brian Hedberg**

**Greg Domke**

**Design Team Present:**

**Mike Fischer-Chair**

**Michael Schroeder**

**Introduction**

Mr. Staunton introduced himself and informed those present that this is the fourth meeting in a series of meetings on the Public Works Small Area Guide Process. Past meetings included the appointment of members to the Community Advisory Team (CAT). This "team" includes a representative from each of the four quadrants of the City, business and property owners, and members of various City boards and commissions. Mr. Staunton reported during this process he has learned that this area has changed dramatically over the last 50 years, but what

had remained constant are the railroad tracks and the roads. Mr. Staunton explained today's meeting is with the property and business owners of the Grandview area, adding it will be interesting to learn what their business is, and why they picked this specific location to do business.

### Discussion

The following business owners shared their history:

Linda Odell, Edina Family Physicians informed the group they have been in the area for over 35 years and serve many Edina and metro area residents. Ms. Odell explained that their office is an independent medical office. Ms. Odell reported they have two sites in the Grandview area, one, their imaging site which is located outside of the Jerry's parking lot, abutting the School District bus garage facility, and the physician's office a block down Vernon. Ms. Odell said their major issue is that they are landlocked and parking and circulation, for both is problematic.

Ken Johnson, Eden Avenue Grille, said he purchased his restaurant 31 years ago when it was the Pantry. Mr. Johnson said his restaurant is a neighborhood restaurant and he enjoys a good business. Mr. Johnson explained that at the time he purchased the Pantry he owned two other food establishments, was looking for a third, and the size of the kitchen and the quick access to the freeway were major pluses in his decision making process to purchase the property.

Jim Balsch, The UPS Store, said he has operated his store for six years and for him business success is location, location, location. Mr. Balsch said another good point about this location is that customer parking is right in front of his store, adding that is especially important for his type of business. Mr. Balsch said whatever the future plans are for the Grandview area it's important for everyone to keep in mind that the small business owners must keep operating during the redevelopment process. He said that he would like to see a park in at least a portion of the current public works space.

Eric Bredeson, Patisserie, said he located his business in the area six years ago because it was close to home and the size of his space would allow him the opportunity to transport his products to other facilities. Mr. Bredeson said at first he didn't think the location was good, however, the customers are loyal and the business is doing OK. Downtown Excelsior where they have a second location is much more pedestrian friendly.

Matt Boockmeier, 5100 Eden Avenue, said the insurance company he works for (State Farm) has had an office in the Grandview area for many years, adding Edina is a great place to do business and he has developed quite a community base. Mr. Boockmeier said the downside of the area for him was parking and the



limited access points for other facilities in the area such as Our Lady of Grace and Starbucks especially during the morning peak-time hours. He said in his opinion when the public works site is redeveloped the developer should keep in mind the small town feel of Edina and set aside or incorporate into the site an area that continues that small town feel. He would like to see the area as a town center. He added State Farm Insurance won't leave this quadrant of the City. Concluding, Mr. Boockmeier said the area merchants cooperate with each other and are also each others customers.

Ken Jacobson, Washburn McReavy Funeral Home, told the group the location of this facility is excellent, adding it's visible from the highway and Vernon Avenue; however, everyone in the area is aware that there are times when more parking is needed to prevent overflow to accommodate a high profile funeral. Mr. Jacobson said it may be beneficial to build a ramp in the area that would benefit all merchants.

Nancy Grazzini-Olson, said the office building at 5100 Eden Avenue has been on that corner since 1969. Currently, the building has 32 tenants with varied professions. She reported most of the tenants in her building live in Edina and their patients, clients, etc. also come from the area.

Bob Shadduck, Jerry's Enterprises, said Jerry's purchased the site when it was a Kroegers and since that initial purchase expansion followed. Mr. Shadduck said this location is the corporate base for Jerry's Enterprises, adding Jerry's and its other stores are viewed as neighborhood stores; however the grocery store does have a regional draw. Continuing, Mr. Shadduck said there are vacancies in their buildings by design. Mr. Shadduck explained that the needs of large business owners aren't that different from small business owners. All have the need for adequate parking, internal circulation and traffic management. Concluding, Mr. Shadduck said throughout the years he has witnessed a number of development scenarios (some failed, others proceeded) within the Grandview area, adding in his opinion this area is a vital economic hub.

Mr. Staunton asked business owners to share their ideas on how to make the area better and how to redevelop the public works site. Comments are as follows:

- A serious pedestrian and traffic analysis needs to be done before redevelopment. A current analysis will enhance decision making.
- Traffic management needed.
- Consider mixed-use for redevelopment housing/commercial/public space.
- Consider providing more and varied transit opportunities (which is important for the City and area merchants).
- When redeveloping the site encourage keeping that small town feel.

- Make the public works site pedestrian friendly; and work on making the entire area pedestrian friendly – it would be great to be able to safely cross over to City Hall on foot from the Grandview commercial/business/mixed use neighborhood.
- Try to create ways for small businesses to be able to own their space; not just rent.
- Consider creating a condo-type office/commercial model. If you own property you feel you have more of a voice.
- Maximize the great location, everyone knows where 50<sup>th</sup> & France is - create ways to ensure that everyone knows where Highway 100 and Vernon is.
- Create more parking and consider the option of building a parking ramp. Parking is an issue for some area merchants at this time.
- If more parking is implemented that means more people to the area. Have MnDot weigh in on traffic/intersections/management.
- Acknowledge that parking and circulation issues arise because of the location of the school bus garage.
- Implement some form of “park and ride” – frequently people park all day in the commercial parking spaces and proceed to ride the bus downtown for work.
- Acknowledge that parking does occur on City streets in some areas, which is why more parking needs to be made available in the area.
- Retain green space where possible. Create a park the current public works space.

In response to comments from business and property owners on people using their parking spaces as a “park and ride” Ms. Worthington noted that the City has had ongoing conversations with Metro Transit on that specific issue. Ms. Worthington said the meetings with Metro Transit have been helpful.

Peyton Robb, Edina School District in response to comments on the “bus garage” site explained that the school district is willing to relocate the bus garage; however, in reality, finding funding to relocate the garage is the issue. Mr. Robb stated that the school district asked if it could be a co-owner on the Con-Agra site. He said that although it hadn’t been formally studied, he thought the bus garage could have moved to the southwest quadrant without a transportation problem.

"Ms. Worthington responded that it didn't work to have us share that facility, but that the City had approached the School District on numerous occasions and the school district did not want to fund a relocation of the facility. The City moved forward with the Con-Agra site because it needed to move the facility, but that site was not large enough to accommodate both facilities."



Gene Persha asked if the school district looked at other locations to relocate the bus garage. Mr. Robb acknowledged that at this time the school district isn't actively looking for a new location for the bus garage, reiterating the district doesn't have the capital to do that. Mr. Robb said in the past the district was approached by both the City and area merchants (because of the central location of the bus garage) with the opinion that there was a better land use for this site other than the bus garage; however, the value of the land would have to provide enough funds to facilitate a move. That hasn't happened. Continuing, Mr. Robb said another thing to keep in mind is that space is needed to relocate the bus garage. The district has between 50-54 buses that operate 9 + months per year for school and special events including providing transportation for Our Lady of Grace.

Mr. Rofidal asked Mr. Robb if there would be a benefit moving the bus garage to the "old" public works site. Mr. Robb said that could be possible; however, no detailed analysis was done on the site to see if the site has the proper turning radius, etc. Mr. Rofidal inquired about the frequency of buses using Highway 100. Mr. Robb responded that buses use Highway 100 somewhat; however, the majority of bus traffic is kept to City streets.

Mr. Staunton asked Mr. Robb if outsourcing was ever considered. Mr. Robb responded that hasn't been considered, adding because of the reality of bidding there would be no dollar savings. Edina's costs are the lowest in the State.

A question was raised if the bus garage has maintenance and vehicle wash capability. Mr. Robb responded in the affirmative. Ms. Worthington mentioned that the new public works site will have an oversized vehicle wash bay that could be used by the school district to wash their buses. The site also has the proper turning radius for buses.

Ms. Montgomery asked Ms. Worthington how large the new public works site is. Ms. Worthington responded that the new public works building is roughly 3-times larger than the current public works building and the tract size is 4-acres. Ms. Worthington said the new facility also allows all City vehicles to be under cover, which is important for the diesel trucks because they have to be kept at a certain temperature. Plows can also be left on the trucks extending the life of the vehicle and saving time.

Ms. Montgomery commented that what is important to remember during this process is maintaining the sense of community.

Mr. Staunton stated he agreed with a number of the comments shared and acknowledged there are significant public structures on each side of Highway 100 and a safe and easy pedestrian connection would be an asset.

Mr. Fischer said it's important to maintain the synergy of the area and be open to creative solutions and looking forward. Mr. Fischer questioned if the end result would be a financial gain would area merchants be willing to move (within the area) if the area was reconfigured. Mr. Baisch responded that he likes his location, it works for him, but if he could continue to operate while the reconfiguration was occurring he would be willing. He said to shut business down for an extended period of time wouldn't work. That would be a hardship. Other merchants agreed closing business for even a week would hurt.

Mr. Shadduck said for 25 years the school district has been approached and nothing has come to fruition, adding he understands the position of the school district, but merchants and residents should realize (as previously mentioned by Mr. Robb) that the district will not move; it doesn't have the money to invest in relocating. Mr. Robb agreed, he said the district wants to be a good community member; reiterating there isn't the capital available to relocate. The district can't do it alone. Help is needed to fund a move. Concluding, Mr. Robb stressed the school district is flexible.

Mr. Staunton thanked everyone for attending and reported the process will continue on Wednesday, April 21, 2010, in the Council Chambers with a community meeting. In wrapping up the meeting Mr. Staunton said in response to concerns raised requesting that an overall traffic analysis be done; that at least for this process there isn't enough time. Continuing, Mr. Staunton asked everyone to think about establishing principles to make this area successful. Mr. Staunton said the CAT and design teams will also provide guidance. Mr. Staunton concluded that Michael Schroeder was the lead for the Design Charrette (April 23 & 24<sup>th</sup>)

Mr. Schroeder explained the goal of the charrette would be to frame principles and gather conceptual ideas. Continuing, Mr. Schroeder said what he expects to see at the charrette is conceptual organization. Mr. Schroeder commented that wide spread change isn't expected; change can't occur overnight.

Nancy Grazzini-Olson said at the past meeting Jack Broz supplied information on the frontage exit/entrances for Highway 100 that to her made sense, adding she would like to hear from him again. Mr. Schroeder said he would approach Mr. Broz and see if he is available, adding maybe more time would be afforded if he attends a meeting. It was suggested if Mr. Broz was able to attend a meeting it would be scheduled from 6:30-9:30 pm allowing Mr. Broz the opportunity to speak first, and the meeting to resume after.

Ms. Montgomery asked about having the City Council connected to the small area guide process to ensure that they are fully informed.



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Mr. Staunton responded that there was a conscious plan to keep the two separate as having members of the Council in the meetings could change the tenor of the process.

Gene Persha said he wants to make sure the "word gets out" on this process. Ms. Worthington said the City has used the City website, City Extra, Sun Current, About Town and everything at the City's disposal to get the word out. Ms. Worthington said the City will continue to do that.

Meeting adjourned 10:00 am

**April 27, 2010 - Meeting Minute Approval**

**Ms. Odell moved approval of the April 14, 2010 Public Works Site Small Area Guide Process/Focus Group meeting. Mr. Hedberg seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion for approval carried.**